

# Edelweiss Board of Directors Meeting

## March 22, 2009

**Date:** *March 22, 2009*

**Present:** Leonard Yerkes, Pat Leigh, Dick Lindblad, Karen Reneau, Kris McMullen (via phone), Mary Kiesau, and Stan Wentzel (via phone)

**Absent:** Larry Goldie, Derek Phipps

**Staff Present:** Dick Volckmann, Craig Hook and Linda McWhirter

**Guests:** Carol Volckmann

**Chair:** Pat Leigh

**Minutes Recorder:** Mary Kiesau

**Meeting Started at 3:00 pm and adjourned at 6:15 pm**

### 1. President's Report

- **Assessments in 2009?:** We reviewed what the By-Laws state about the special assessment voting process and had a not very linear discussion about this process and whether we might hold a vote for a special assessment this year. Pat stated in her report that EMC's basic needs can be met with our current fee structure, but that if we make improvements to our infrastructure, we will most likely need to ask members to approve an assessment in 2009. We concluded that we could hold a vote by mail OR at the annual meeting. A "majority" of the vote is required to pass a special assessment and the By-Laws state that majority means 55%. Whether and how much a special assessment might be depends on whether we are awarded a low-interest loan from the WA Dept of Health Office of Drinking Water Economic Recovery Funds for Water Systems to upgrade several sections of our water lines.
  - At the time of this meeting Dick had not heard back from the DOH. He outlined the seven separate applications he had submitted. There are more details in Dick's report, but the day after this meeting Dick received word that none of our applications were selected. (There were 27 selected projects out of 347 applications in WA)
  - Dick did note that the Highland Meadow Line is being done regardless of the loan, and we have the funds in our budget to upgrade it. Dick thought the East Fawn Creek Road Line really should be done when the Co-Op digs and puts their new lines in. Partnering on the work will save a lot of time and money, as well as enable us to get all the work done with one excavation. It was suggested that doing the work on this line could be proposed for a special assessment by itself even if we don't do an assessment for the full amount of the other 5 lines.
- **Assessing Late-Fees and Placing Property Liens:**
  - The 2009 annual dues are 78% paid and the rest will likely come in soon. Reminders have been emailed and mailed. Receiving dues and fees from members is not and has not been a problem for the most part. However, there are 2-3 members that are severely behind and a few members have requested to make monthly or broken-down payments.
  - Currently, these few severely overdue payments are not affecting our overall budget, but we discussed at some length what to do when someone is severely behind. We reviewed our current "Policy on Overdue Invoices and Collection" as well as our written "Procedures for Claim of Liens." We agreed we would change the word "quarterly" to "monthly" in the Policy sentence, "Quarterly statements will be issued after assessing finance charges."
  - We agreed we needed to have a clear and implemented policy but we debated what, how and the merits of attempting to do something more than we already do, which is put a lien on someone's property. A list of ideas, in no particular order, included: (1) Refer anyone that is severely in debt to us to a collection agency, (2) Have a face-to-face conversation with the person and work out a

- payment plan, (3) Report the person to credit agencies, and (4) Turn off the person's water.
- Everyone agreed turning someone's water off should be avoided and used as a last resort. Dick and Leonard agree to talk more with the Town of Winthrop about when and how they decide to cut off someone's water. We know they wait about 90 days.
- We thought our current policy was clear. We agreed we will put it on the website after we've decided whether to add any more actions (such as turning off water, filing info with credit companies, etc.)
- Dick & Linda will discuss options for payment plans for all Edelweiss fees/dues – for all members.
- **Grooming the Upper Meadow:** We had a discussion of the past season and what we might need to do to continue grooming the upper meadow in the future, including possibly buying a better snowmobile, whether or not to use volunteers, insurance and liability issue and more
  - The cost of grooming is not provided for in our Association Dues. We rely on donations from interested members. This year, we received donations from 28 members totaling \$2280 and incurred expenses of \$1342, leaving \$938 in the fund. This included the purchase of the grooming equipment and hiring some help. We agreed this would continue to be a donor-supported endeavor, including paying for Edelweiss staff time. If there are not enough annual or ongoing donations to support the project, it will not continue.
  - There were lots of questions, mostly unanswerable, about insurance, but it was agreed that if Edelweiss owns the snowmobile and only staff run and maintain it, then it should be easily added to our insurance. Dick agreed to check with Mel Hartwig and our insurance company about liability, etc.
  - We discussed Pat's proposal to donate \$250 to MVSTA for their help this winter. Karen suggested that other members may have donated to them already and that Pat should talk to Jay to see what he thinks.

***Leonard made a motion to give Pat Board approval to donate up to \$250 from the donated funds to MVSTA.*** There was not a second and no vote was taken. Pat agreed to bring the matter back to the Board for approval after speaking with MVSTA.

- **EMC Website:** Karen and Pat will work together to update our documents and create a new look. Their goal is to have a new website up and running in time for the Annual Meeting. Mary suggested that Karen/Pat ask Hector Bianchi if he would like to assist Karen with the new Dreamweaver software and the revamping of the website.
- **New Board Member Recruitment:** At this year's annual meeting, we will need to elect 3 new Board Members. Terms are expiring for Dick Lindblad, Derek Phipps and Larry Goldie. We discussed possible new members, and some Board members agreed to talk to community members. Some felt that people that are brand-new to the community should live here for a year or so before being asked to join. Some felt that we needed one or more people that are raising kids in Edelweiss to be on the Board. We are agreed we should strive to have a diverse representation of Edelweiss members.
  - Leonard said we needed to be clear about the amount of time and meetings that being on the Board requires. This led to Mary expressing some concerns about not having clarity on how the Board and staff function and communicate (separately and together); who makes decisions and how they are made; the role of email in-between Board meetings; whether there are clear roles and responsibilities we can give to potential new members, etc. Some discussion ensued.
- **Community Garden Update:** Pat said she attended a small meeting about creating a community garden, and that the interested individuals are hoping to present a proposal to the Board in the future. This is a planning year, and any potential garden would not exist for another year or two.

## **2. Manager's Report**

- **Old Edelweiss Documents:** Dick has been sorting through and organizing all the old materials that were in the campground building (bath-house). Much of it is being recycled but many helpful things that will be

organized and archived have been found as well. The goal is to have everything completely categorized by the close of 2009. Of the things he has found are over 100 house-plans that have been submitted to Edelweiss. Dick says house-plans are proprietary and should be returned to whoever submitted them. Linda will put a note in the newsletter and Dick will attempt to reach owners.

- **Firewise:** Dick has received 5 separate bid proposals for the work, all approaching \$60,000. Our matching grant from the Forest Service is \$25,000, meaning that at a bid for \$60,000, Edelweiss is obligated to come up with \$35,000. The result is that we would have to charge back to each property owner an average of approximately \$875.000. If the figures are prorated based on the amount of time to treat each individual property, some owners will be paying over \$1000. Dicks doubts the average Edelweiss owner will accept this proposal. He has submitted the bids to the Forest Service for their review, asking for input on how to reduce the cost to Edelweiss owners. Additionally, the FS rules mandate that machinery can only be used on snow or frozen ground. Because this process has taken so long and spring is here, the bids include doing the work by hand and so come with a much bigger price tag than anticipated. Additionally, there is essentially zero market for lumber, meaning that there is no way for a contractor to defray any of his expenses by selling the timber.
  - Since Dick's written report, he has heard from one of the Firewise administrators that a variance has been sent out to all the bidders in an attempt to receive lower bids.
  - Discussion ensued. Pat expressed her frustration that Edelweiss apparently did not accomplish as much as was hoped with the last Firewise grant, which she was told could have thinned the entire development, and shared her desire that we make every effort to see this Firewise project through, even if not all the landowners continue to participate. Regardless of the price, she wants to give them the opportunity to take advantage of the matching funds. Dick agreed to approach all the landowners in the current Firewise proposal when he has a solid idea of what the program will cost each of them.
- **Water Leak:** As noted some time ago via email, the worrisome water leak this winter was discovered on the McKenna's Cassel property. Another homeowner had a washing machine hose leak staff later discovered. Linda will put a note in the newsletter asking homeowners to turn their water off when they are away for a week or more.
- **Water System Survey:** We received a letter informing us that this will be the year that the Department of Health will be conducting its sanitary survey of our water system. The survey recurs every five years. The survey will probably take place in July. We need to install a flow meter in the campground but otherwise should have no problem with the survey.
- **Water Metering:** Part of the loan application mentioned at the top (that we now know we didn't receive) involves the standardization of water metering in Edelweiss. However, whether or not we receive the loan funds for the work, we plan to begin the process of upgrading our metering system to a point where it will be possible to read meters remotely and computerize the results. We currently have no method of metering water use and everyone is charged the same amount.
  - The cost of the metering upgrade is not yet known and could vary widely from homeowner to homeowner depending on whether they have a meter already or not, whether meters can be retrofitted and/or whether meters are in the ground under a concrete vault. Dick and Craig are continuing to research the issue and Craig will survey all the existing lots soon. They hope to have a good idea of the total costs by the time of the annual meeting.
  - We continued to discuss some of the costs and variables as well as whether acquiring funds for this work could be achieved through a community assessment for common utilities, which does not require a membership vote, or whether it needed to be done through a "special assessment," which does require a membership vote. According to the By-Laws, it seems the Board has the power to implement a new water metering system, but the assessment question seemed fuzzier. Pat and the staff will continue to research and gather information with a goal of presenting the issue with as

much information as possible on costs at the annual meeting

- We have until 2017 to legally be required to meter. The deadline had been 2010, but this changed in October 2008.
- **Edelweiss's Comprehensive Plan:** Mel Hartwig has completed our comprehensive plan showing the priorities and costs of upgrading our water supply system. The plan 27 separate road sections. Dick had copies of the plan for Board members.
  - Some discussion ensued of where we are compliant and where we aren't. At some point in the future, if we approach build-out, our water delivery system may not be sufficient. (We have enough storage capacity, enough water and enough water rights but the pipes aren't big enough). We do have the right to dig 5 more wells should we need more water. Dick Lindblad cautioned that we be very sure what our water rights are and that we are maintaining them. Dick Volckmann says Mel has assured him that all is okay on this front. We also reviewed some of the priorities in order of preference.
- **Planning Commission Variances:** Leonard and Dick V will be meeting with Ben Rough of the Planning Commission on 3/23 in order to try to determine exactly what considerations the Commission takes into account when variances are granted.
- **Roads:** Per our discussions last year, our intent is to apply lignin sulphate to the up-graded portions of Homestead and Highland roads. As soon as weather and road conditions permit this will be done. The road will be re-graded as part of the lignin application process.
  - It is also clear that significant repair to the asphalt pavement at the entrance to Edelweiss is needed. Craig and Dick are continuing to assess the problem.
- **Cassal Sewer Lift Station:** Recently, the effluent pipe had frozen somewhere between the lift pump and the Highland Meadow drain-field and the holding tank was overflowing. Since then, Wright Construction has been pumping the tank periodically to prevent further overflow problems. The pipe has thawed in the past few days, and the pumps are working again.

### 3. Other Comments & Questions

- Leonard asked about why individuals are continuing to park at the entrance when there is a sign that clearly says not to.

*Leonard made a motion that we look into the cost of acquiring and placing some attractive rocks between the entrance and exit lanes, with the intent to put rocks there should it be legal.*

*Pat seconded*

Discussion. Dick agreed to talk to the county about regulations and setbacks.

4 yeas (Leonard, Pat, Kris Dick L), 2 nays (Mary, Stan). The voted passed.

- Mary asked about the situation/status of the road that has appeared in the lower section of the lower meadow. Dick and Craig explained that a renter needed propane and the truck could not make it down the normal driveway. The plowing of the road was to be a one-time arrangement and was not supposed to be plowed to the dirt and was not supposed to be driven on again. The one-time right was abused and the renter and homeowner have both been spoken to. Any needed repairs to the meadow will be paid by the renter/landowner.
- Mary asked about the status of the pool (see past Board minutes). Dick said that it seems everything has worked out and the pool will be open as usual this summer. An inspector with the county is going to draft a letter stating that we do not need a drain. We will however be getting a better chlorine test so that we will be using the same equipment that the county uses when they do inspections.
- Mary also asked about the right to alter campground lots.
- Kris inquired about the desire and/or need to make back-up copies (hard or electronic) of the important Edelweiss documents that Dick is finding. In lieu of scanning or copying, storing them in a fireproof safe was another idea.